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PRUDENCE SAYS SO

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CHAPTER X.

The End of Fairy.

Now that the twins had attained to the dignity of eighteen years, and were respectable students at the thoroughly respectable Presbyterian college, they had dates very frequently. And it was along about this time that Mr. Starr developed a sudden interest in the evening callers at his home. He bobbed up unannounced in most unexpected places and at most unexpected hours. He walked about the house with a sharp, sly look in his eyes, in a way that could only be described as Carol said, by "downright noisiness."

The girls discussed this new phase of his character when they were alone, but decided not to mention it to him, for fear of hurting his feelings. "Maybe he's got a new kind of a sermon up his brain," said Carol. "Maybe he's beginning to realize that his clothes are wearing out again," suggested Lark. "He's too young for second childhood," Connie thought. So they watched him curiously.

Aunt Grace, too, observed this queer devotion on the part of the minister, and finally her curiosity overcame her habit of keeping silent.

"William," she said gently, "what's the matter with you lately? Is there anything on your mind?"

Mr. Starr started nervously. "My mind? Of course not. Why?"

"You seem to be looking for something. You watch the girls so closely, you're always hanging around, and—"

He smiled broadly. "Thanks for that. 'Hanging around,' in my own parsonage. That is the gratitude of a loving family!"

Aunt Grace smiled. "Well, I see there's nothing much the matter with you. I was seriously worried. I thought there was something wrong, and—"

"Sort of mentally unbalanced, is that it? Oh, no, I'm just watching my family."

She looked up quickly. "Watching the family! You mean—"

"Carol," he said briefly.

"Carol! You're watching—"

"Oh, only in the most honorable way, of course. You see, he gave his explanation with an air of relief. 'Prudence always says I must keep an eye on Carol. She's so pretty, and the boys get stuck on her, and—that's what Prudence says. I forgot all about it for a while. But lately I have begun to notice that the boys are older, and—we don't want Carol falling in love with the wrong man. I got uneasy. I decided to watch out. I'm the head of this family, you know.'"

"Such an idea!" scoffed Aunt Grace, who was not at all of a meddling nature.

"Carol was born for lovers, Prudence says so. And these men's girls have to be watched, or the wrong fellow will get ahead, and—"

"Carol doesn't need watching—not any more at least."

"I'm not really watching her, you know. I'm just keeping my eyes open."

"But Carol's all right. That's one time Prudence was away off." She smiled as she recognized a bit of Carol's slang upon his lips. Don't worry about her. You needn't keep an eye on her any more. She's coming, all right."

"You don't think there's any danger of her falling in love with the wrong man?"

"No."

"There aren't many worth having fellows in Mount Mark, you know."

"Carol won't fall in love with a Mount Mark fellow."

"You seem very positive."

"Yes, I'm positive."

He looked thoughtful for a while. "Well, Prudence always told me to watch Carol, so I could help her if she needed it."

"Girls always need their fathers," came the quick reply. "But Carol does not need you particularly. There's only one of them who will require special attention."

"That's what Prudence says."

"Yes, just one—not Carol."

"Not Carol!" He looked at her in astonishment. "Why, Fairy and Lark are—different. They're all right. They don't need attention."

"No. It's the other one."

"The other one! That's all."

"There's Connie."

cray. Connie—why, Connie has never been any trouble in her life. Connie!"

"You've never had any friction with Connie, she's always been right so far. One of these days she's pretty likely to be wrong, and Connie doesn't yield very easily."

"But Connie's so sober and straight, and—"

"That's the kind."

"She's so conscientious."

"Yes, conscientious."

"She's—look here, Grace, there's nothing the matter with Connie."

"Of course not, William. That isn't what I mean. But you ought to be getting very, very close to Connie right now, for one of these days she's going to need a lot of that extra companionship Prudence told you about. Connie wants to know everything. She wants to see everything. None of the other girls ever yearned for city life. Connie does. She says when she is through school she's going to the city."

"What city?"

"Any city."

"What for?"

"For experience."

Mr. Starr looked about him helplessly. "There's experience right here," he protested feebly. "Lots of it. Entirely too much of it."

"Well, that's Connie. She wants to know, to see, to feel. She wants to live. Get close to her, get chummy. She may not need it, and then again she may. She's very young yet."

"All right, I will. It is well I have some one to steer me along the proper road." He looked regretfully out of the window. "I ought to be able to see these things for myself, but the girls seem perfectly all right to me. They always have. I suppose it's because they're mine."

Aunt Grace looked at him affectionately. "It's because they're the finest girls on earth," she declared. "That's why. But we want to be ready to help them if they need it, just because they are so fine. They will every one be splendid, if we give them the right kind of a chance."

He sat silent a moment. "I've always wanted one of them to marry a preacher," he said, laughing apologetically. "It is very narrow-minded, of course, but a man does make a hobby of his own profession. I always hoped Prudence would. I thought she was born for it. Then I looked to Fairy and she turned me down. I guess I'll have to give up the notion now."

She looked at him queerly. "Maybe not."

"Connie might, I suppose."

"Connie," she contradicted promptly, "will probably marry a genius, or a rascal, or a millionaire."

He looked dazed at that.

She leaned forward a little. "Carol might."

"Carol—"

"She might." She watched him narrowly, a smile in her eyes.

"Carol's too worldly."

"You don't believe that."

"No, not really. Carol—she—why, you know what I think of it. Carol wouldn't be half bad for a minister's wife. She has a sense of humor, that is very important. She's generous, she's patient, she's unselfish, a good mixer—some of the ladies might think her complexion wasn't real, but—"

Grace, Carol wouldn't be half bad."

"Oh, William," she sighed, "can't you remember that you are a Methodist minister, and a grandfather, and—grow up a little?"

After that Mr. Starr returned to normal again, only many times he and Connie had little outings together, and talked a great deal. And Aunt Grace, seeing it, smiled with satisfaction. But the twins and Fairy settled it in their own minds by saying, "Father was just a little jealous of all the beaux. He was looking for a pal, and he's found Connie."

But in spite of his new devotion to Connie, Mr. Starr also spent a great deal of time with Fairy. "We must get fast chums, Fairy," he often said to her. "This is our last chance. We have to get cemented for a lifetime, you know."

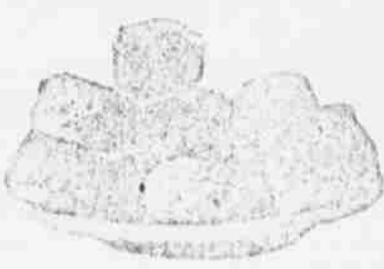
And Fairy, when he said so, caught his hand and laughed a little tremulously.

Indeed he was right when he said it was his last chance with Fairy in the parsonage. Two weeks before her commencement she had slipped into the library and closed the door cautiously behind her.

"Father," she said, "would you be very sorry if I didn't teach school after all?"

"Not a bit," came the ready answer. "I mean if I—you see, father, since you sent me to college I feel as if I ought to work and—help out."

WHEATLESS BISCUITS.



Parbaked cornmeal is the feature of these excellent wheatless biscuits. First, the cornmeal—about a cup—is put in a shallow pan placed in the oven and stirred frequently until it is a delicate brown. The other ingredients are a teaspoon of salt, a cup of peanut butter and one and a half cups of water. Mix the peanut butter, water and salt and heat. While this mixture is hot stir in the meal which should also be hot. Beat thoroughly. This dough should be of such consistency that it can be dropped from a spoon. Bake in small cakes in an ungreased pan. It's makes 10 biscuits, each of which contains one-sixth of an ounce of protein.

DELICIOUS CORN MUFFINS.



Here's an old fashioned recipe for corn muffins that has recently been revived and used with unusual success in several of the larger New York hotels. To make three and a half dozen muffins take one quart milk, six ounces butter substituting twelve ounces of light syrup or honey, four eggs, pinch of salt, two ounces baking powder, one and a half pounds cornmeal and one and a half pounds rye flour. The butter and syrup should be thoroughly melted; then add the eggs gradually. Pour in the milk and add the rye flour mixed with cornmeal and baking powder.

Save

1-wheat
use more corn

2-meat
use more fish & beans

3-fats
use just enough

4-sugar
use syrups

and serve
the cause of freedom
U. S. FOOD ADMINISTRATION

"That's nonsense," he said, drawing the tall girl down to his knees. "I can take care of my own family, thanks. Are you trying to run me out of my job? If you want to work, all right, do it, but for yourself, and not for us. Or if you want to do anything else, he did not meet her eyes, "if you want to stay at home a year or so before you get married, it would please us better than anything else. And when you want to marry Gene, we're expecting it, you know."

"Yes, I know," she fingered the lapel of his coat uneasily. "Do you care how soon I get married?"

"Are you still sure it is Gene?"

"Yes, I'm sure."

"Then I think you should choose your own time. I am in no hurry. But any time—it's for you and Gene to decide."

"Then you haven't set your heart on any teaching?"

"I set my heart on giving you the best chance possible. And I have done it. For the rest, it depends on you. You may work, or you may stay at home a while. I only want you to be happy, Fairy."

"But doesn't it seem foolish to go clear through college, and spend the money, and then—marry without using the education?"

"I do not think so. They've been fine years, and you are finer because of them. There's just as much opportunity to use your fitness in a home of your own as in a public school. That's the way I look at it."

"You don't think I'm too young?"

"You're pretty young," he said slowly. "I can hardly say, Fairy. You're always been capable and self-possessed. When you and Gene get so crazy about each other you can't bear to be apart any longer, it's all right here."

She put her arm around his neck and rubbed her fingers over his cheek lovingly.

"You understand, don't you, father, that I'm just going to be plain married when the time comes? Not a wedding like Prudence's. Gene, and the girls, and Prue and Jerry, and you, father, that is all."

"Yes, all right. It's your day, you know."

"And we won't talk much about it beforehand. We all know how we feel

about things. It would be silly for me to try to tell you what a grand, sweet father you've been to us. I can't tell you—if I tried I'd only cry. You know what I think."

His face was against hers, and his eyes were away from her, so Fairy did not see the moisture in his eyes when he said in a low voice:

"Yes, I know, Fairy. And I don't need to say what fine girls you are, and how proud I am of you. You know



"You Don't Think I'm Too Young?"

it already. But sometimes," he added slowly, "I wonder that I haven't been a bigger man, and haven't done finer work, with a household of girls like mine."

Her arm pressed more closely about his neck. "Father," she whispered, "don't say that. We think you are wonderfully splendid, just as you are. It isn't what you've said, not what you've done for us, it's just because you have always made us so sure of you. We never had to wonder about father, or ask ourselves—were we sure? We've always had you." She leaned

over and kissed him again. "Now we understand each other, don't we?"

"I guess so. Anyhow, I understand that there'll only be three daughters in the parsonage pretty soon. All right, Fairy. I know you will be happy." He paused a moment. "So will I."

But the months passed, and Fairy seemed content to stay quietly at home, embroidering as Prudence had done, laughing at the twins as they tripped gaily, robustly through college. And then in the early spring she sent an urgent note to Prudence.

"You must come home for a few days. Prue, you and Jerry. It's just because I want you and I need you. And I know you won't go back on me. Just wire you are coming—the three of you. I know you'll be here, since it is I who ask it."

It followed naturally that Prudence's answer was satisfactory. "Of course we'll come."

Fairy's plans were very simple. "We'll have a nice family dinner Tuesday evening. We'll all be together, nice and quiet. Just our own little bunch. Don't have dates, twins—of course Gene will be here, but he's part of the family, and we don't want outsiders this time. His parents will be in town, and I've asked them to come up. I want a real family reunion just for once, and it's my party, for I started it. So you must let me have it my own way."

After the first confusion of welcoming Prudence home, and making fun of "Shady Jerry," and testing the weight and length of little Fairy, they all settled down to a parsonage homecoming. Just a few minutes before the dinner hour, Fairy took her father's hand.

"Come into the limelight," she said softly. "I want you." He passed little Fairy over to the outstretched arms of the youngest aunt, and allowed himself to be led into the center of the room.

"Gene," said Fairy, and he came to her quickly, holding out a slender roll of paper. "It's our license," said Fairy. "We think we'd like to be married now, father, if you will."

He looked at her questioningly, but understandingly. The girls clustered about them with eager curiosities, half protest, half encouragement.

"It's my day, you know," cried Fairy, "and this is my way."

She held out her hand, and Gene took it very tenderly in his. Mr. Starr looked at them gravely for a moment, and then in the gentle voice that the parsonage girls insisted was his most valuable ministerial asset, he gave his second girl in marriage.

It surely was Fairy's way, plain and sweet, without formality. And the dinner that followed was just a happy family dinner. Fairy's face was so glowing with content, and Gene's attitude was so tender, and so ludicrously proud, that the twins at last were convinced that this was right, and all was well.

But that evening, when Gene's parents had gone away, and after Fairy and Gene themselves had taken the carriage to the station for their little vacation together, and Jerry and Prudence were putting little Fairy to bed, the three girls left in the home sat drearily in their bedroom and talked it over.

"We're thinning out," said Connie. "Who next?"

"We'll stick around as long as we like, Miss Connie, you needn't try to shuffle us off," said Lark indignantly.

"Prudence, and Fairy—it was pretty cute of Fairy, wasn't it?"

"Let's go to bed," said Carol, rising. "I suppose we'll feel better in the morning. A good sleep is almost as filling as a big meal after a blow like this. Well, that's the end of Fairy. We have to make the best of us. Come on, Larkie. You've still got us to boss you, Con, so you needn't feel too forlorn. My, but the house is still! In some ways I think this family is positively sickening. Good night, Connie. And, after this, when you want to eat candy in bed, please use your own. I got chocolate all over my foot last night. Good night, Connie. Well, it's the end of Fairy. The family is going to pieces, sure enough."

(To be continued.)

Cyclist Messengers Satisfactory.

One of the difficulties that has been experienced by infantry following up a retreat, has been the quick transmission of reports and the maintenance of touch with their flanking column, writes a war correspondent. In cyclist training no little time is devoted to perfecting the system of communication, and experience has proved that cyclist messengers are both a speedier and more reliable means of communication than either telephones, which have to be laid, or visual signaling.

Prior to 1914, there were many who asserted that cyclists were too vulnerable to be of use. It has been proved already that they were wrong, even though the character of the war in the West has not been peculiarly favorable to cyclist operations, and that cyclist battalions are and will continue to be one of the most important and valuable arms of the service.

Her Valid Defense.

One has heard a good deal about the Russian woman warriors. Sensational stories about them have appeared from time to time in the European press. Altogether, there is a flavor of romance about the Russian amazons which is lacking entirely in the totally unlooked-for defense put up by an English working woman. A suit had been brought against her for having failed to pay the money due for the hire of her sewing machine. Asked what she had got to say for herself, she replied: "Nothing; I am unable to pay, as I was wounded a short time ago, fighting against the Austrians." It quite disconcerted the court! Her papers were examined by the judge, and found to be in order. Needless to say, the charge against her was withdrawn.—Christian Science Monitor.

WED, COURT LATER

Armenians Choose Girl First, Take Chance on Love.

American Principal of School in Turkey Receives Letter Requesting Any One of Three.

Armenian marriages are always arranged, the question of love not entering, writes Hester Donaldson Jenkins in World Outlook. I remember when the principal of an American school said to one of her teachers who was contemplating matrimony: "I hate to have you go, but I should not mind so much if you loved him," that the Armenian drew herself up indignantly; she would not be so unmanly as to love a man before marriage.

An Armenian man generally picks out his own wife, one whom he has seen and approved. But he does not court her; instead he goes to her parents and makes very careful inquiries as to her health, disposition and housewifery, after which he bargains keenly for her dot. Without a dot an Armenian girl may scarcely marry.

The American principal of a school for Armenian girls in Turkey received a great many applications for wives from the Armenian men of the neighborhood. Once she received a letter which read something like this:

"Your Nobleness,

"Mademoiselle: I wish to marry one of the girls in your school. Will you get me little Aznif, her of the curly braids and strong eyebrows? Or if you cannot obtain her for me, then I will take Marian, with the big black eyes and the shining teeth; or if I cannot have her, I wish Zarroohee, with the straight features and white skin. But do not offer me any other, for I love only these three."

In the same school occurred the unique experience of Schmorrig. Dikran had come to her father and bargained for her. When she was told of her impending marriage she was sulky and sad, for she had read English books and did not wish to be sold to a husband like a bale of rugs. But she left school and let her mother prepare her trousseau. At the formal betrothal she and Dikran met for the first time. When the priest put the question whether she was willing to be betrothed to this man she shocked all the relatives assembled in festive array by a bold "No."

The priest argued with her, and the brave father would probably have forced her by pushing her head forward had not Dikran declared that he liked her spirit and would not have her forced to take him. So the party broke up in tears and lamentations. But the two young people met each other a good deal that winter, naturally taking an interest in each other, so the story ends with a happy marriage after a real American courtship.

THIRTY YEARS' WAR PLAGUES

Sweeping Away of Lives Was Frightful, Combatants Themselves Being Mown Down.

In the famous Thirty Years' war, it is estimated, the population of central and western Europe was reduced from thirty millions to less than fifteen millions, and yet during the whole of that time there were very few important battles fought, and their total death casualties did not reach half a million.

All the rest of the frightful sweeping away of life was from plague and famine, which not only followed in the wake of the armies, but mowed down the combatants themselves.

Nor was the deadly work of these fierce partners of war—the terrible triple alliance of the prayer book, plague, pestilence and famine—confined to the civil populations. They played equal havoc in the ranks of the armies themselves.

Even as recently as the days of Gustavus Adolphus that great captain is said to have broken up his winter quarters and begun his summer campaign nearly two months earlier than he had intended, because at the rate at which his soldiers were dying from disease in their huts and barracks he would soon have had no army left to campaign with.

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